



Cleanup Work Progresses on Leachate Release Problem

Little Traverse Bay Cement Kiln Dust Release Site
Petoskey, Michigan

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Contact EPA

These EPA representatives can answer your questions or discuss the Bay Harbor situation:

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Petoskey Public Library
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Temporary shoreline collection trenches designed to stop corrosive, contaminated leachate from entering Lake Michigan appear to be working. Remaining parts of an interim drainage and pump system should be completed by the end of this year, according to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 5. These collection systems are intercepting between 90,000 and 200,000 gallons per day of leachate that was flowing into Lake Michigan under the Bay Harbor Resort. These numbers will increase as additional interim trenches are brought on line. EPA officials said testing and sampling will continue over the next few months to determine if the trenches are stopping most of the caustic seepage. If the trenches are not working well enough, CMS Energy, which is paying for the short-term cleanup measures, may be required to modify them or build alternative systems. The operation of all interim collection trenches across the site will continue until permanent remedies have been selected, implemented and shown to be effective.

Investigation work continues

In the meantime, EPA and its partners will continue evaluation of CMS' proposed alternatives for a permanent cleanup plan at the East Park portion of the site. Concurrently, EPA will continue to oversee CMS' investigation field work for the rest of the former Penn-Dixie facility locations within the boundaries of the Bay Harbor Resort. Once that work has been completed, the regulatory agencies will review permanent cleanup alternatives for those areas. It is expected that this process will be completed sometime in 2007.

Permanent cleanup project will take longer

EPA and CMS last year negotiated legal agreements under which the energy company will build the temporary cleanup measures and study the site. Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, with EPA assistance, will oversee CMS when it designs and builds a long-term cleanup system. EPA officials believe CMS is making progress in stopping the flow of leachate into Lake Michigan. EPA, MDEQ and other partnering agencies will continue to work closely with CMS to develop and implement permanent remedies. Study, design and construction of the permanent cleanup plan will likely take at least two more years. CMS Energy has indicated to EPA that it hopes to make design work on the permanent remedy for the seepage problem at East Park a priority so that it can be returned to the public as soon as possible.

History

The pollution is coming from cement kiln dust piles on a former industrial site along a 5-mile stretch of shoreline on the northwest tip of Michigan's lower peninsula. Precipitation and underground water are mixing with the cement dust and causing seepage (leachate) into the lake and pooling on some parts of the beach. The leachate can be as caustic as household bleach and can burn skin. It often contains metals such as arsenic and mercury.

Several sections of shoreline totaling about a mile in length have been fenced off to block access to affected beaches. The Bay Harbor Resort was built on top of the former industrial site.